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The Sword and the Propagation of the Gospel.

The great missionary conference which recently closed its sessions in New York raises the serious question, What might have been the transformation wrought by Christianity if its professors had, up to this day, always maintained the unarmed attitude of its Founder and his first-century followers? The question is anything but an idle one. The most conspicuous moral accomplishment recorded anywhere in history is the spread and triumph of Christianity during the first hundred years after the death of Christ. This took place without any reliance on or use of the sword. The religion, the wealth, the military power of every nation into which Christianity came were arrayed against it. The sword cut down its adherents by hundreds and thousands. But instead of turning to the sword in retaliation, in support of their work, or even in self-defense, brute force and violence were definitely, openly and joyfully renounced by Christ's followers. The intellectual power of truth, the spiritual power of God and the moral power of pure, loving, self-giving Christian manhood and womanhood were the only forces employed by the Christians. They succeeded gloriously. Why could not this success have been continued, if the same faithfulness to principle had been maintained?

The cross has never since known any such sweeping and unbroken success as in those enthusiastic days of swordless simplicity, childlike reliance on God and insistence on loving universal brotherhood. For nearly three centuries many of the great teachers of the Church held fast to the pacific spirit and teaching of the Master. But gradually the body of believers gave way, and the leaders with them. From Constantine on, for more than a thousand years, the story of the Church is full of ambition, selfish intrigue, and the horrors of war. Whatever success the Church had was largely worldly and material, not

spiritual. Some of the fine life of the early days remained, in quiet circles, but it was loaded down and rendered quite powerless by the incubus of worldly might. There is no other argument against Christianity so hard to meet as the record of this corrupt, bloody thousand years of apostacy.

Some of the leaders of the Reformation saw clearly the peaceable nature of Christ's kingdom. Others felt it, but did not venture to proclaim it. John Wyclif, in the dawn of the Reformation, pronounced fighting and war entirely incompatible with true Christian life, but he had no following. Luther was inconsistent in the matter. Calvin warned the Protestants of France against resort to the sword, but did not scruple to take by violence the life of a "heretic." George Fox and John Wesley in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries returned in their teaching to the example of the early Christians, but the great denomination, or group of denominations, founded by the latter has wandered far away from his teachings on war.

With the exception of a few small bodies, the churches growing out of the Reformation have in the main remained in the blindness about war which characterized the dark centuries preceding. No more bloody years have ever been known than those of the religious wars following the early period of the Reformation. To this day the Protestant churches, though now largely favoring arbitration and often deploring war in the abstract, are, with notable exceptions of course, the ever-ready apologists of any particular war in which their country happens to be engaged. It is an open question whether to-day Protestant Christianity as a whole is any further advanced in opposition to war than Roman Catholicism. The law of neither seems to be the mind of the Master, but the demand of current patriotism.

In the missionary work of this century there has been a strong tendency to return to the early Christian belief and practice in regard to war, and to the disuse of arms even in personal self-defense. The missionary workers in the field have, as a whole, in this respect gone much beyond the attitude of the churches at home. An interesting and most forcible argument for peace principles and methods could be made from the lives and eminently successful work

of David Livingstone, Titus Coan, J. Hudson Taylor and many other missionaries of less note, who have in their work wholly discarded the use of carnal weapons. Some of them have been among the most pronounced anti-war men of the century, opposed even to government intervention by force in behalf of missionaries suffering persecution. They have felt deeply the radical inconsistency between the true mission and the true defense of an ambassador of Jesus and the methods of violence supported by so many of their fellow-Christians at home.

It came out at the ecumenical conference in the remarks of more than one speaker, that many of the missionaries feel that the warlike course of the so-called Christian nations toward the non-Christian and ill-civilized nations is one of the greatest obstacles to the introduction of the gospel into these countries. Many of the natives come to feel that Christianity is a system of force and conquest, and thus the way is blocked for their acceptance of the real Christianity of the New Testament. For this conduct of the Christian nations the Christian churches within them are very largely responsible. They apologize for war; they are silent about the aggressions made; they encourage civilization by the sword; they insist that their governments shall exact blood for blood, property for property, if any missionary is persecuted or property destroyed. Christian men sit in official seats and direct these policies of force and violence, or excuse them. What wonder that the "poor heathen" are averse to receiving the gospel coming to them amid bursting shells, flowing blood, burning houses and the seizing of their territories.

In spite of this great obstacle, and others, the missionary enterprises of the century have done an incalculable service towards the redemption of the world, towards the abolition of hate and war, towards universal brotherhood and fellowship. The missionaries have been the highest types of self-sacrifice. They have endured untold difficulties. They have poured out their lives like water in ceaseless love and kindness. They have not shed blood. They have overcome evil with good. They have displayed a heroism, — a patient, enduring bravery, to which war can show no parallel.

When one thinks of the return of these ecumenical men and women to their fields, and of the going out of others, for the new work of the future, one cannot but earnestly wish that every one of them may go in the spirit of unarmed love which characterized the early Christians. Most of them will. What might they not do in a single generation if the conduct of the Christian governments toward the peoples among whom they labor were always in the spirit of Christian love, unselfishness and justice! But this will not be so, not for a long time we fear. If only all the Christian churches and individuals in Christian lands would reassume the early Christian attitude toward

war, and wash their hands of the sordid injustices of their countries toward the un-Christianized peoples, and of their mutual jealousies and animosities, missionary work, even thus, would be tenfold easier and more successful than we have yet seen it. The numbers, the wealth, the learning of the Church to-day would be perfectly irresistible, if only they were imbued through and through with the true spirit of Christian love, the weapons of whose warfare are never carnal.

Criminal Use of the Monroe Doctrine.

No more culpable move has been made by those who are determined that our army and navy shall be greatly increased than that made by Secretary of War Root and Senator Lodge, in trying to create a war-scare over the Monroe Doctrine and the German settlements in South America. The guilt is all the greater because of the responsible positions which they hold in the cabinet and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

It has been a favorite trick of militarist schemers in Europe to get up gratuitous war-panics, gull the legislators and the people, and then rush through in hot haste their army and navy extension schemes. Nearly the whole of the vast armaments of Europe built up during the last thirty years have grown out of this sort of scare-mongering. It is a most base and dishonorable proceeding, and one had hoped that the United States might escape any serious development of it. Something of the kind has been tentatively resorted to in this country for years, England and her naval stations all about us being the imaginary skulking lion whose image afflicted the self-frenzied brains of the alarmists. But Senator Lodge and the Secretary of War, "great friends" of England just now, have not only gone beyond all former attempts in this direction, but have cunningly manufactured new reasons for fright suited to the needs of the hour.

At the Grant anniversary celebration in New York on the 27th of April, Secretary Root said: "No man who carefully watches the signs of the times can fail to see that the American people will within a few years have to either abandon the Monroe Doctrine or fight for it, and we are not going to abandon it. If necessary we will fight for it, but unless there is greater diligence in legislation in the future than in the past, when the time comes it may find us unprepared."

Mr. Root does not say what are the signs of the times to which he refers, nor what are the sources from which the danger is coming. He clearly means, however, to create the impression that it will come from abroad, and come with the certainty of fate. The Monroe Doctrine is to be attacked by somebody from Europe; of that he is certain. But otherwise the declaration is as vague and mysterious as the utterance of an old-time oracle. It is not difficult to